

might throw off another yoke and make use of their knowledge for the good of their fellows.

#### **An Object Lesson for the World**

The Negro of a half century ago gave the world an unexampled object lesson, not only of industry, but of loyalty, of actual devotion. Strange to say, there was a very close bond of sympathy between the slave and master in many instances. Many a slave was intrusted with his master's interests, and he even jealously watched over the overseers, who were of another class of whites entirely. The trusted slave was guardian of the family as well. The fidelity shown as the crisis came in the fortunes of the South should never be forgotten by the southern whites. While the masters were absent, fighting in the war of the Rebellion to perpetuate the bond of the servant to the cursed system of slavery, these same servants were standing guard over the helpless women and children left behind, and no one questioned their faithfulness to the trust.

#### **A Life Stranger than Fiction**

It was a life, my friends, that was stranger than any fiction ever portrayed, and the unwritten history of those days would tax the credulity of the world if it were to be truthfully presented with all its facts. But the Negro was more than a trusted friend to those who held him in bondage. He was a veritable statesman in the skill with which he served in a double capacity. Ever loyal and protective toward the dependent ones in his charge, he was equally loyal and protective to those of the northern invading army who required his assistance as fugitives or prisoners. With one hand he helped to feed and care for the former, and with the other he hid from harm, guided and fed the latter. It was a slave, a chattel, a THING that did all this! Was he not even then a man among men? For who but men of high minds and lofty instincts could and would so carefully live up to such trusts and honor?

The Negro was not shut off from spiritual things. His training in the school of slavery had included a knowledge of God and of the Christian religion, — and what a comfort it was! How the heart could let itself out to the Almighty in those wonderful songs of that early day — the "spirituals," as we call them. The simple nature of the race revelled in this, and many a broken heart found in this outpouring of the emotions its only relief.

#### **The Negro in the Midst of Exciting Times**

The Negro found himself then in the midst of exciting times — the days when the Underground Railroad was a mysterious means of escape from slavery, and when night and day devices, many, skillful, and cunning, were resorted to in helping on to freedom and safety those who sought it. Will the whole truth ever find the light concerning all this? We think not. Then came the change — so joyful, so sudden, so responsible! Thank God, we were in a measure prepared. Those whose secret yearning and persistent labor had enabled them to gain some knowledge were ready to take hold of the work of uplifting; and the race fifty years ago had a strong instrument in the children of Richard Allen's church. The Negro made use of them from the day when the first transports took missionaries to the Southland, for they carried also in May, 1865, Bishop D. A. Payne and a band of followers to the city of Charleston, from which he had been driven thirty years before as a dangerous educated Negro who was giving too much learning to the race. Then and there was planted the standard of African Methodism, and I am proud to say that as a young man I lent my hand to the first early efforts of the church in my native state, along both spiritual and educational lines.

#### **Grateful for the Aid of the North**

For the aid of the North, we as a people shall ever be grateful. The Negro at that time was helpless and we owe an eternal debt to those self-sacrificing ones who came to us in our hour of need, and devoted time, talents, and money — all to our service. And it was no mistake. It was our impelling force on and up. When we look back on that peculiar past, with its varied situations, its varied experiences, its varied teachings, we are inclined to wonder at the race evolved from it. Why should it not be more vicious, when immorality was not only allowed but commanded, when the virtue of the race was largely disregarded? Why should it not be almost wholly criminal when we consider the thousands upon thousands conceived in degraded passions, and brutalized in every sense? Why should the world expect so much of it to-day?

#### **"Our Least Crime is Exploited"**

To-day our least crime is exploited throughout the country, and countless ones laid to our charge of which we are wholly innocent. When we consider the situation of that past which con-